

§ 648.86(a)(2)(i), and provided the vessel has at least one standard tote on board.

(d) A vessel issued a valid open access nonregulated multispecies permit may possess and land nonregulated multispecies. The vessel is subject to restrictions on gear, area, and time of fishing specified in § 648.80 and any other applicable provisions of this part.

[61 FR 34968, July 3, 1996, as amended at 61 FR 39910, July 31, 1996]

**§ 648.89 Recreational and charter/party restrictions.**

(a) *Recreational gear restrictions.* Persons aboard charter or party vessels permitted under this part and not fishing under the DAS program, and recreational fishing vessels in the EEZ, are prohibited from fishing with more than two hooks per line and one line per angler and must stow all other fishing gear on board the vessel as specified under §§ 648.23(b) and 648.81(e) (2), (3), and (4).

(b) *Recreational minimum fish sizes—(1) Minimum fish sizes.* Persons aboard charter or party vessels permitted under this part and not fishing under the DAS program, and recreational fishing vessels in the EEZ, are subject to minimum fish sizes (TL) as follows:

MINIMUM FISH SIZES (TL)		
Species	Inches	
	1996	1997+
Cod .....	20 (50.8 cm)	21 (53.3 cm)
Haddock .....	20 (50.8 cm)	21 (53.3 cm)
Pollock .....	19 (48.3 cm)	19 (48.3 cm)
Witch flounder (gray sole) ..	14 (35.6 cm)	14 (35.6 cm)
Yellowtail flounder .....	13 (33.0 cm)	13 (33.0 cm)
American plaice (dab) .....	14 (35.6 cm)	14 (35.6 cm)
Winter flounder (blackback)	12 (30.5 cm)	12 (30.5 cm)
Redfish .....	9 (22.9 cm)	9 (22.9 cm)

(2) *Exception.* Vessels may possess fillets less than the minimum size specified, if the fillets are taken from legalized fish and are not offered or intended for sale, trade or barter.

(c) *Possession restrictions.* Each person on a recreational vessel may not possess more than 10 cod and/or haddock, combined, in or harvested from the EEZ.

(1) For purposes of counting fish, fillets will be converted to whole fish at the place of landing by dividing fillet number by two. If fish are filleted into

a single (butterfly) fillet, such fillet shall be deemed to be from one whole fish.

(2) Cod and haddock harvested by recreational vessels with more than one person aboard may be pooled in one or more containers. Compliance with the possession limit will be determined by dividing the number of fish on board by the number of persons aboard. If there is a violation of the possession limit on board a vessel carrying more than one person, the violation shall be deemed to have been committed by the owner and operator.

(3) Cod and haddock must be stored so as to be readily available for inspection.

(d) *Restrictions on sale.* It is unlawful to sell, barter, trade, or otherwise transfer for a commercial purpose, or to attempt to sell, barter, trade, or otherwise transfer for a commercial purpose, NE multispecies caught or landed by charter or party vessels permitted under this part not fishing under a DAS or a recreational fishing vessels fishing in the EEZ.

**§ 648.90 Framework specifications.**

(a) *Annual review.* The Multispecies Monitoring Committee (MSMC) shall meet on or before November 15 of each year to develop target TACs for the upcoming fishing year and options for NEFMC consideration on any changes, adjustment or additions to DAS allocations, closed areas, or other measures necessary to achieve the NE Multispecies FMP goals and objectives.

(1) The MSMC shall review available data pertaining to: Catch and landings, DAS and other measures of fishing effort, survey results, stock status, current estimates of fishing mortality, and any other relevant information.

(2) Based on this review, the MSMC shall recommend target TACs and develop options necessary to achieve the FMP goals and objectives, which may include a preferred option. The MSMC must demonstrate through analysis and documentation that the options it develops are expected to meet the NE Multispecies FMP goals and objectives. The MSMC may review the performance of different user groups or fleet sectors in developing options. The range of options developed by the

MSMC may include any of the management measures in the NE Multispecies FMP, including, but not limited to: Annual target TACs, which must be based on the projected fishing mortality levels required to meet the goals and objectives outlined in the NE Multispecies FMP for the 10 regulated species; DAS changes; possession limits; gear restrictions; closed areas; permitting restrictions; minimum fish sizes; recreational fishing measures; and any other management measures currently included in the NE Multispecies FMP.

(3) The NEFMC shall review the recommended target TACs and all of the options developed by the MSMC and other relevant information, consider public comment, and develop a recommendation to meet the NE Multispecies FMP objective that is consistent with the other applicable law. If the NEFMC does not submit a recommendation that meets the NE Multispecies FMP objectives and is consistent with other applicable law, the Regional Administrator may adopt any option developed by the MSMC, unless rejected by the NEFMC, as specified in paragraph (a)(6) of this section, provided the option meets the NE Multispecies FMP objective and is consistent with other applicable law.

(4) Based on this review, the NEFMC shall submit a recommendation to the Regional Administrator of any changes, adjustments or additions to DAS allocations, closed areas or other measures necessary to achieve the NE Multispecies FMP's goals and objectives. Included in the NEFMC's recommendation will be supporting documents, as appropriate, concerning the environmental and economic impacts of the proposed action and the other options considered by the NEFMC.

(5) If the NEFMC submits, on or before January 7, a recommendation to the Regional Administrator after one NEFMC meeting, and the Regional Administrator concurs with the recommendation, the Regional Administrator shall publish the NEFMC's recommendation in the FEDERAL REGISTER as a proposed rule. The FEDERAL REGISTER notification of the proposed action will provide a 30-day public comment period. The NEFMC may instead submit its recommendation on or

before February 1, if it chooses to follow the framework process outlined in paragraph (b) of this section and requests that the Regional Administrator publish the recommendation as a final rule. If the Regional Administrator concurs that the NEFMC's recommendation meets the NE Multispecies FMP objective and is consistent with other applicable law, and determines that the recommended management measures should be published as a final rule, the action will be published as a final rule in the FEDERAL REGISTER. If the Regional Administrator concurs that the recommendation meets the FMP objective and is consistent with other applicable law and determines that a proposed rule is warranted, and, as a result, the effective date of a final rule falls after the start of the fishing year on May 1, fishing may continue. However, DAS used by a vessel on or after May 1 will be counted against any DAS allocation the vessel ultimately receives for that year.

(6) If the Regional Administrator concurs in the NEFMC's recommendation, a final rule shall be published in the FEDERAL REGISTER on or about April 1 of each year, with the exception noted in paragraph (a)(5) of this section. If the NEFMC fails to submit a recommendation to the Regional Administrator by February 1 that meets the FMP goals and objectives, the Regional Administrator may publish as a proposed rule one of the options reviewed and not rejected by the NEFMC, provided that the option meets the FMP objective and is consistent with other applicable law. If, after considering public comment, the Regional Administrator decides to approve the option published as a proposed rule, the action will be published as a final rule in the FEDERAL REGISTER.

(b) *Within season management action.* The Council may, at any time, initiate action to add or adjust management measures if it finds that action is necessary to meet or be consistent with the goals and objectives of the Northeast Multispecies FMP or to address gear conflicts as defined under §600.10 of this chapter.

(1) *Adjustment process.* After a management action has been initiated, the

Council shall develop and analyze appropriate management actions over the span of at least two Council meetings. The Council shall provide the public with advance notice of the availability of both the proposals and the analysis and opportunity to comment on them prior to and at the second Council meeting. The Council's recommendation on adjustments or additions to management measures, other than to address gear conflicts, must come from one or more of the following categories: DAS changes, effort monitoring, data reporting, possession limits, gear restrictions, closed areas, permitting restrictions, crew limits, minimum fish sizes, onboard observers, minimum hook size and hook style, the use of crucifiers in the hook-gear fishery, fleet sector shares, recreational fishing measures, area closures and other appropriate measures to mitigate marine mammal entanglements and interactions, and any other management measures currently included in the FMP.

(2) *Adjustment process for gear conflicts.* The Council may develop a recommendation on measures to address gear conflict as defined under 50 CFR 600.10, in accordance with the procedure specified in § 648.55(d) and (e).

(3) *NEFMC recommendation.* After developing management actions and receiving public testimony, the NEFMC shall make a recommendation to the Regional Administrator. The NEFMC's recommendation must include supporting rationale and, if management measures are recommended, an analysis of impacts and a recommendation to the Regional Administrator on whether to issue the management measures as a final rule. If the NEFMC recommends that the management measures should be issued as a final rule, the NEFMC must consider at least the following factors and provide support and analysis for each factor considered:

(i) Whether the availability of data on which the recommended management measures are based allows for adequate time to publish a proposed rule, and whether regulations have to

be in place for an entire harvest/fishing season.

(ii) Whether there has been adequate notice and opportunity for participation by the public and members of the affected industry in the development of the NEFMC's recommended management measures.

(iii) Whether there is an immediate need to protect the resource or to impose management measures to resolve gear conflicts.

(iv) Whether there will be a continuing evaluation of management measures adopted following their implementation as a final rule.

(4) *Regional Administrator action.* If the NEFMC's recommendation includes adjustments or additions to management measures and, after reviewing the NEFMC's recommendation and supporting information:

(i) If the Regional Administrator concurs with the NEFMC's recommended management measures and determines that the recommended management measures should be issued as a final rule based on the factors specified in paragraph (b)(2) of this section, the measures will be issued as a final rule in the FEDERAL REGISTER.

(ii) If the Regional Administrator concurs with the NEFMC's recommendation and determines that the recommended management measures should be published first as a proposed rule, the measures will be published as a proposed rule in the FEDERAL REGISTER. After additional public comment, if the Regional Administrator concurs with the NEFMC recommendation, the measures will be issued as a final rule in the FEDERAL REGISTER.

(iii) If the Regional Administrator does not concur, the NEFMC will be notified in writing of the reasons for the non-concurrence.

(c) *Emergency action.* Nothing in this section is meant to derogate from the authority of the Secretary to take emergency action under section 305(e) of the Magnuson Act.

[61 FR 34968, July 3, 1996, as amended at 62 FR 1405, Jan. 10, 1997; 62 FR 14650, Mar. 27, 1997]